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SPEECH

OF THE

HON. JOSIAH QUINCY,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE U. STATES,

JANUARY 25, 1812.

IN RELATION TO

MARITIME PROTECTION.

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CONGRESS.

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1812.

The Report of a Committee of the whole House on
the bill " concerning a Naval establishment being under
consideration, the Speaker was address : by Mr. QUINCY,
of Massachusetts :



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MR. SPEAKER,

I rise to address you, on this occasion, with no affected diffidence ; and with many doubts, concerning the expediency of taking any part, in this debate. On the one hand, the subject has been discussed with a zeal, industry and talent, which leave but little scope for novelty, either in topic, or illustration. On the other hand, arguments from this side of the house, in favor of this question, are received with so natural a jealousy, that I know not, whether more may not be lost than gained, by so unpropitious a support. Indeed, Sir, if this subject had been discussed on narrow, or temporary, or party principles, I should have been silent. On such ground I could not condescend to debate ; I could not hope to influence. But the scale of discussion has been enlarged and liberal ; relative rather to the general system, than to the particular exigency ; in almost every respect, it has been honorable to the house, and auspicious to the prospects of the nation. In such a state of feeling and sentiment, I could not refrain from indulging the hope, that suggestions, even from no favorite quarter, would be received with candor, perhaps with attention. And, when I consider the deep interest, which, the state, from which I have the honor to be a representative, has, according to my apprehension, in the event, I cannot permit the opportunity, entirely, to pass, without bringing my small tribute of reflection, into the general stock of the house.

The object I shall, chiefly, attempt to enforce, is the necessity and duty of a systematic protection of our maritime rights, by maritime means. I would call the thoughtful, and intelligent men of this House and nation, to the contemplation of the essential connexion, between a naval force, proportionate to the circumstances of our sea coast, the extent of our commerce, and the inherent enterprise of our people ;—I say, sir, I would call them to the contemplation of the essential connexion, between such a naval force and the safety, prosperity and existence of our union. In the course of my observations, and as a subsidiary argument, I shall also attempt to shew the connexion between the adoption of the principle of a systematic maintenance of our maritime rights, by maritime

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whole House on
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by Mr. QUINCY,

means, and relief from our present national embarrassments.

I confess to you, Mr. Speaker, I never can look, indeed, in my opinion, no American statesman ought ever to look, on any question, touching the vital interests of this nation, or of any of its component parts, without keeping at all times, in distinct view, the nature of our political association, and the character of the independent sovereignties, which compose it. Among states, the only sure and permanent bond of union is interest. And the vital interests of states, although they may be sometimes obscured, can never, for a very long time, be misapprehended. The natural protection, which the essential interests of the great component parts of our political association require, will be, sooner or later, understood, by the states, concerned in those interests. If a protection, upon system, be not provided, it is impossible that discontent should not result. And need I tell statesmen, that, when great local discontent is combined, in those sections, with great physical power and with acknowledged portions of sovereignty, the inbred ties of nature will be too strong for the artificial ties of parchment compact?—

Hence it results that the essential interests of the great component parts of our association, ought to be the polar lights of all our statesmen. By them they should guide their course. According to the bearings and variations of those lights should the statesmen of such a country adjust their policy. Always bearing in mind two assurances, as fundamental principles of action, which the nature of things teaches;—that although temporary circumstances, party spirit, local rivalries, personal jealousies, suggestions of subordinate interests, may weaken, or even destroy, for a time, the influence of the leading and permanent interests of any great section of the country, yet those interests must ultimately, and necessarily predominate and swallow up all these local, and temporary, and personal, and subordinate considerations; in other words, the minor interests will soon begin to realize the essential connexion, which exists between their prosperity, and the prosperity of those great interests, which, in such sections of the coun-

try, nature has made predominant ;—and, that no political connexion, among free states, can be lasting, or ought to be, which systematically, oppresses, or systematically refuses to protect, the vital interests of any of the sovereignties, which compose it.

I have recurred to these general considerations, to introduce, and elucidate this principle, which is, the basis of my argument :—that, as it is the incumbent duty of every nation to protect its essential interests, so it is the most impressive and critical duty of a nation, composed of a voluntary association of vast, powerful and independent states, to protect the essential interests of all its great, component, parts. And I add, that this protection must not be formal, or fictitious, but that it must be proportionate to the greatness of those interests, and of a nature to give content to the states, concerned in their protection.

In reference to this principle, the course of my reflections will be guided by two general inquiries ; the nature of the interest to be protected ; the nature of the protection to be extended. In pursuing these inquiries, I shall touch very slightly, if at all, on the abstract duty of protection ; which is the very end of all political associations and without the attainment of which, they are burdens & no blessings. But I shall keep it mainly, in my purpose, to establish the connexion between a naval force and commercial prosperity ; and to show the nature of the necessity, and the degree of our capacity, to give to our maritime rights a maritime protection.

In contemplating the nature of the interest to be protected, three prominent features strike the eye and direct the course of reflection ; its locality ;—its greatness ;—and its permanency.

The locality of any great interest, in an association of states, such as compose this union, will be a circumstance of primary importance, in the estimation of every wise statesman. When a great interest is, equally, diffused over the whole mass, it may be neglected, or oppressed, or even abandoned, with less hazard of internal dissension. The equality of the pressure lightens the burden. The common nature of the interest removes the causes of jea-

lousy. A concern, equally affecting the happiness of every part of the nation, it is natural to suppose is equally dear to all; and equally understood by all. Hence results acquiescence, in any artificial, or political embarrassment of it. Sectional fears and suspicions, in such case, have no food for support and no stimulant for activity. But it is far otherwise, when a great interest is, from its nature, either wholly, or in a very great proportion, local. In relation to such a local interest, it is impossible, that jealousies and suspicions should not arise, whenever it is obstructed by any artificial, or political embarrassment. And it is also, impossible, that they should not be, in a greater, or less degree, just. It is true of the wisest, and the best, and the most thoughtful, of our species, that they are so constituted, as not deeply to realise the importance of interests, which affect them not at all, or very remotely. Every local circle of states, as well as of individuals, has a set of interests, in the prosperity of which, the happiness of the section, to which they belong is identified. In relation to which interests the hopes and the fears, the reasonings and the schemes of the inhabitants of such sections are necessarily, fashioned and conducted. It is, morally, impossible, that those, concerned in such sectional interests, should not look, with some degree of jealousy, on schemes adopted, in relation to those interests and prosecuted by men, a majority of which have a very remote or very small stake, in them. And this jealousy must rise to an extreme height,* when the course of measures adopted, whether they have relation to the management, or the protection of such interests, wholly contravene the opinions and the practical experience of the persons, immediately concerned in them. This course of reflection has a tendency to illustrate this idea, that as, in every political association, it is of primary importance that the great interests of each local section should be, skillfully and honestly, managed and protected, so, in selecting the mode and means of management and protection, an especial regard should be had to the content and rational satisfaction of those most deeply concerned, in such sectional interests. Theories and speculations of the closet, however,

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abundant, in a show of wisdom, are never to be admitted to take the place of those principles of conduct, in which experience has shewn the prosperity and safety of such interests to consist. Practical knowledge, and that sagacity, which results from long attention to great interests, never fail to inspire a just self-confidence, in relation to those interests. A confidence, not to be browbeaten by authority; nor circumvented by any general reasoning. And, in a national point of view, it is scarcely of more importance, that the course adopted should be wise, than that content and rational satisfaction, should be given.

On this topic of locality, I shall confine myself to one or two very plain statements. It seems sufficient to observe, that commerce is, from the nature of things *the leading interest* of more than one half, and that it is *the predominating interest*, of more than one third, of the people of these United States. The States, North of the Potomac, contain nearly *four millions* of souls; and surely it needs no proof to convince the most casual observer, that the proportion, which the commercial interest bears to the other interests of that great section of the Union, is such as entitles it to the denomination of a *leading interest*. The States, North of the Hudson, contain nearly *two and a half millions* of souls; and surely there is as little need of proof to shew that, the proportion, the commercial interest bears to the other interests of that Northern section of the union is such, as entitles it, there, to the denomination of a *predominating interest*. In all the country, between the Potomac and the Hudson, the interest of commerce is so great, in proportion to the other interests that its embarrassment clogs and weakens the energy of every other description of industry. Yet the agricultural and manufacturing interests of this section are of a nature and a magnitude, both in respect of the staples of the one, and the objects of the other, as render them, in a very considerable degree, independent of the commercial. And although they feel the effect of the obstruction of commerce, the feeling may be borne, for a long time, without much individual suffering; or any general distress. But, in the country, north of the Hudson, the proportion and connexions of these great interests are dif-

ferent. Both agriculture and manufactures have, there, grown up in more intimate relation to commerce. The industry of that section has its shape and energy from commercial prosperity. To the construction, the supply and the support of navigation, its manufactures have a direct, or indirect, reference. And it is not very different with its agriculture. A country, divided into small farms, among a population, great, compared with its extent, requires quick circulation and easy processes, in the exchange of its commodities. This can only be obtained by an active and prosperous commerce.

In order more clearly to apprehend the locality of the commercial interest, cast your eyes upon the abstract of tonnage, lately laid upon our tables, according to annual custom, by the secretary of our treasury. It will be found that

	<i>Tons.</i>
The aggregate tonnage of the U. States is	1,424,000
Of this there is owned between the Mississippi and the Potomac	221,000
Between the Potomac and the Hudson,	321,000
And north of the Hudson,	882,000
	1,424,000

If this tonnage be estimated, new and old, as it may, without extravagance, at an average value of fifty dollars the ton ;

The total aggregate value of the tonnage of the United States may be stated, in round numbers, at	\$ 70,000,000
Of which four sevenths are owned north of the Hudson, equal to	\$ 40,000,000
Two sevenths are owned between the Hudson and the Potomac, equal to	\$ 20,000,000
One seventh is owned south of the Potomac, equal to	\$ 10,000,000

\$ 70,000,000

To place the locality of this interest in a light still more striking and impressive, I state, that it appears by that abstract that THE SINGLE STATE OF MASSACHU-

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SETTS ALONE, POSSESSES NEARLY HALF A MILLION OF TONNAGE. Precisely, in round numbers, 496,000 tons.

An amount of tonnage equal, within fifty thousand tons, to the whole tonnage, owned by all the states south of the Hudson.

I refer to this excessive disproportion between the tonnage, owned in different states and sections of the United States, rather as a type, than as an estimate, of the greatness of the comparative disproportion of the whole commercial interest, in those respective states and sections. The truth is, this is much greater than the proportion of tonnage indicates, inasmuch as the capital and the industry, occupied in finding employ for this great amount of tonnage, are almost wholly possessed by the sections of the country, to which that tonnage belongs. A satisfactory estimate of the value of that capital and industry would require a minuteness of detail, little reconcileable either with your patience, or with the necessity of the present argument. Enough has been said to convince any one, who will take the trouble to reflect upon the subject, that the interest, is, in its nature, eminently local; that it is impossible it can be systematically abandoned, without convulsing that whole section of country; and that the states, interested in this commerce, so vital to their prosperity, have a right to claim, and ought not to be content with less, than efficient protection.

The imperious nature of this duty will be still farther enforced by considering *the greatness of this interest*. In doing this, I prefer to present a single view of it; lest by distracting the attention to a great variety of particulars, the effect of the whole should be lost, in the multitude of details. Let us inquire into the amount of property, annually exposed to maritime depredation and what the protection of it is worth, to the nation, which is its proprietor. An estimate of this kind must, necessarily, be very loose and general. But it will be, sufficiently, accurate to answer all the purposes of the argument. For the subject is of that massive character, that a mistake of many millions makes no material alteration, in the conclusion to be drawn from the statement.

The total export of the United States, in the treasury year, ending on the 1st day of

October, 1807, was 108,000,000 of dollars. That of the year ending the 1st of October, 1811, was \$ 61,000,000. The average value exceed, 80,000,000. But to avoid all cavil I state the annual average value of exports of the United States, at \$ 70,000,000

To this add the annual average value of the shipping of the United States, which, new and old, cannot be less than \$ 50 the ton, and on one million four hundred thousand tons, is also 70,000,000

To this add the average annual value of freight, out and home, which, calculated on voyages of all descriptions, may be fairly stated at \$ 70 the ton, and is 98,000,000

For this estimate of the value of freight and tonnage, I am indebted to an honorable friend and colleague, (Mr. Reed) whose information and general intelligence concerning commercial subjects are, perhaps, not exceeded by those of any gentleman, in either branch of congress.

To this add the total average value of property annually at risque, in our coasting trade, which cannot be less than and probably far exceeds 100,000,000

Our seamen are also the subjects of annual exposure. The value of this hardy, industrious and generous race of men is not to be estimated in money. The pride, the hope and, if you would permit, the bulwark of this commercial community, are not to be put into the scale, against silver, or gold, in any moral, or political estimate. Yet, for the present object, I may be permitted to state the value of the skill and industry of these freemen, to their country, at \$ 500 each, which on 120,000 seamen the unquestionable number is 60,000,000

Making a gross aggregate of \$ 398,000,000

Although I have no question of the entire correctness of this calculation, yet for the purpose of avoiding every objection, which might arise, in relation to the value of freight or tonnage, I put out of the question ninety-eight millions, of the above estimate, and state the amount of annual maritime exposure at only \$ 300,000,000.

To this must be added the value of the property on our seaboard, of all the lives of our citizens and of all the cities and habitations, on the coast, exposed to instant insult and violation, from the most contemptible maritime plunderer. No man can think that I am extravagant, if I add, on this account, an amount equal to that, annually exposed at sea, and state the whole amount of maritime and sea coast exposure, in round numbers, at **SIX HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.**

I am aware that this estimate falls short of the reality. I know that the safety of our domestic hearths and our altars, and the security of all the dear and tender objects of affection and duty, which surround them, are beyond the reach of pecuniary estimates. But, I lay those considerations out of the question, and simply inquire, what is the worth of a rational degree of security, in time of war, for such an amount of property, considering it merely as an interest to be insured, at the market rate, of the worth of protection. Suppose an individual had such a property at risque, which, in time of peace, was subject to so much plunder and insult, and, in time of war, was liable to be swept away, would he not be deemed, unwise, or rather absolutely mad, if he neglected, at the annual sacrifice of one, or two, or even three per cent, to obtain, for this property, a very high degree of security; as high, perhaps, as the divine will, permits man to enjoy, in relation to the possessions of this life, which, according to the fixed dispensations of his Providence, are necessarily uncertain and transitory? But suppose that instead of one, two, or three per cent, he could by the regular annual application of *two thirds of one per cent*, upon the whole amount of the property, at risque, obtain a security thus high and desirable. To what language of wonder and contempt would such an individual subject himself, who, at so small a sacrifice, should refuse, or neglect to obtain so

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important a blessing? What, then, shall be said of a nation, thus neglecting and thus refusing, when to it attach, not only all the considerations of interest and preservation of property, which belong to the individual, but other, and far higher, and more impressive: such as the maintenance of its peace, of its honor, the safety of the lives of its citizens, of its seaboard from devastation and even, perhaps, of its children, and females from massacre, or brutal violence? Is there any language of contempt and detestation too strong for such blind infatuation; such palpable improvidence? For let it be remembered that *two thirds of one per cent, upon the amount of property, thus annually exposed, is Four Millions of Dollars.* The annual, systematic appropriation of which amount would answer all the purposes and hopes of commerce, of your cities and seaboard.

But, perhaps, the greatness of this interest and our pecuniary ability to protect it may be made more strikingly apparent, by a comparison of our commerce with that of Great Britain, in the single particular of export.

I state, then, as a fact, of which any man may satisfy himself, by a reference to M-Pherson's Annals of Commerce, where the tables of British export may be found, that, taking the nine years prior to the war of our revolution from 1766 to 1774, inclusive, the total average export of Great Britain was £ 16,000,000 sterling, equal to \$71,000,000. An amount less, by ten million of dollars, than the present total average export of the U. States.

And again, taking the nine years, beginning with 1794, and ending with 1799, inclusive, the total average annual export of Great Britain was £ 24,000,000 sterling, equal to \$ 106,000,000, which is less by two millions of dollars, than the total export of the United States, in 1807. It is true that this is the *official value* of the British export and that the *real value* is somewhat higher; perhaps thirty per cent. This circumstance, although it, in a degree, diminishes the approximation of the American to the British commerce, in point of amount, does not materially affect the argument. Upon the basis of her commerce Great Britain maintains a maritime force of eight hundred, or a thousand, vessels of war. And will it be se-

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riously contended that, upon the basis of a commerce, like ours, thus treading upon the heels of British greatness, we are absolutely without the ability of maintaining the security of our sea-board, the safety of our cities and the unobstructed course of our coasting trade?

By recurring to *the permanency of this interest*, the folly and madness of this negligence, and misplaced mean-ness, for it does not deserve the name of economy, will be, still more distinctly, exhibited. If this commerce were the mushroom growth of a night, if it had its vigour from the temporary excitement and the accumulated nutriment, which warring elements, in Europe, had swept from the places of their natural deposit, then, indeed, there might be some excuse for a temporising policy, touching so transitory an interest. But commerce, in the eastern states, is of no foreign growth; and of no adventitious seed. Its root is of a fibre, which almost two centuries have nourished. And the perpetuity of its destiny is written, in legible characters, as well in the nature of the country, as in the dispositions of its inhabitants. Indeed, sir, look along your whole coast, from Passamaquoddy to Capes Henry and Charles, and behold the deep and far winding creeks and inlets, the noble basons, the projecting head lands, the majestic rivers, and those sounds and bays, which are more like inland seas, than like any thing, called by those names, in other quarters of the globe. Can any man do this and not realize, that the destiny of the people, inhabiting such a country, is essentially maritime? Can any man do this, without being impressed by the conviction that, although the poor projects of politicians may embarrass, for a time, the dispositions, growing out of the condition of such a country, yet that nature will be too strong for cobweb regulations and will vindicate her rights, with certain effect; perhaps with awful perils? No nation ever did, or ever ought to, resist such allurements and invitations to a particular mode of industry. The purposes of Providence, relative to the destination of men are to be gathered from the circumstances, in which his beneficence has placed them. And, to refuse to make use of the means of prosperity, which his goodness has put into our hands,

what is it, but spurning at his bounty, and rejecting the blessings, which his infinite wisdom has designated for us, by the very nature of his allotments? The employments of industry, connected with navigation and commercial enterprise, are precious to the people of that quarter of the country, by ancient prejudice, not less than by recent profit. The occupation is rendered dear and venerable, by all the cherished associations of our infancy and all the sage and prudential maxims of our ancestors. And, as to the lessons of encouragement, derived from recent experience, what nation, ever within a similar period, received so many that were sweet and salutary? What nation, in so short a time, ever before ascended to such a height of commercial greatness?

It has been said, by some philosophers of the other hemisphere, that nature, in this new world, had worked by a sublime scale; that our mountains, and rivers and lakes were, beyond all comparison, greater than any thing the old world could boast; that she had, here made nothing diminutive.—EXCEPT ITS ANIMALS. And ought we not to fear lest the bitterness of this sarcasm should be concentrated on our country, by a course of policy, wholly unworthy of the magnitude and nature of the interests, committed to our guardianship? Have we not reason to fear that some future cynic, with an asperity, which truth shall make piercing, will declare, that all things, in these United States, are great,—EXCEPT ITS STATESMEN; and that we are pigmies, to whom Providence has entrusted, for some inscrutable purpose, gigantic labours? Can we deny the justice of such severity of remark, if, instead of adopting a scale of thought and a standard of action, proportionate to the greatness of our trust and the multiplied necessities of the people, we bring to our task the mere measures of professional industry; and mete out contributions for national safety by our fee-tables, our yard sticks and our gill-pots? Can we refrain from subscribing to the truth of such censure, if we do not rise, in some degree, to the height of our obligations; and teach ourselves to conceive, and with the people to realise, the vastness of those relations, which are daily spring-

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Having concluded what I intended to suggest, in rela-
tion to the nature of the interest to be protected, I proceed
to consider the nature of the protection, which, it is our
duty to extend.

And, here, Mr. Speaker, I am necessitated to make
an observation, which is so simple and so obvious, that,
were it not for the arguments, urged against the princi-
ple of maritime protection, I should have deemed the
mere mention of it, to require an apology. The remark
is this, that rights, in their nature local, can only be
maintained, where they exist, and not where they do not
exist. If you had a field to defend in Georgia, it would
be very strange to put up a fence in Massachusetts.
And yet, how does this differ from invading Canada, for
the purpose of defending our maritime rights? I beg not
to be understood, Mr. Speaker, by this remark, as in-
tending to chill the ardor for the Canada expedition.
It is very true, that to possess ourselves of the Canadas,
and Nova Scotia and their dependencies, it would cost
these, United States, at the least estimate, *Fifty Mil-
lions of Dollars*; and that Great-Britain, national pride,
and her pledge of protection to the people of that country,
being put out of the question, would sell you the whole
territory, for half the money. I make no objection,
however, on this account. On the contrary, for the pur-
poses of the present argument, I may admit, that pecu-
niary calculation ought to be put out of the field, when
spirit is to be shewn, or honor vindicated. I only design
to inquire how our maritime rights are protected, by
such invasion. Suppose that, in every land project, you are
successful. Suppose both the Canadas, Quebec, Halifax,
every thing to the North Pole, yours, by fair conquest.
Are your rights, on the ocean, therefore, secure? Does
your flag float, afterwards, in honor? Are your seamen
safe from impressment? Is your course along the high-
way of nations unobstructed? No one pretends it. No one
has, or can shew, by any logical deduction, or any detail
of facts, that the loss of those countries would so com-
press Great Britain, as to induce her to abandon for one

hour, any of her maritime pretensions. What then results? Why, Sir, What is palpable, as the day, that maritime rights are only to be maintained by maritime means. This species of protection must be given, or all clamor about maritime rights will be understood, by the people interested in them, to be hollow, or false; or, what is worse, an intention to co-operate, with the enemies of our commerce, in a still farther embarrassment of it.

While I am on this point, I cannot refrain from noticing a strange solecism, which seems to prevail, touching the term FLAG. It is talked about, as though there was something mystical in its very nature; as though a rag, with certain stripes and stars upon it, tied to a stick, and called a flag, was a wizzard wand, and entailed security on every thing under it, or within its sphere. There is nothing like all this, in the nature of the thing. A flag is the evidence of power. A land flag is the evidence of land power. A maritime flag is the evidence of maritime power. You may have a piece of bunting upon a staff, and call it a flag, but if you have no maritime power to maintain it, you have a name, and no reality; you have the shadow, without the substance; you have the sign of a flag, but in truth—YOU HAVE NO FLAG.

In considering this subject of maritime protection, I shall recur to the nature and degree of it, and to our capacity to extend it. And, here, we are always met, at the very threshold with this objection; "A naval force requires much time to get it into readiness, and the exigency will be past, before the preparation can be completed." Thus want of foresight, in times past, is made an apology for want of foresight, in the time present.—We were unwise, in the beginning and unwise we resolve to continue, until the end of the chapter. We refuse to do any thing until the moment of exigency, and then it is too late. Thus our improvidence is made sponsor for our disinclination. But what is the law of nature and the dictates of wisdom, on this subject? The casualties of life, the accidents, to which man is exposed, are the modes, established by Providence, for his instruction. This is the law of our nature. Hence it is that adversity is said to keep a school, for certain people, who will learn in no

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other. Hence, too, the poet likens it to "a toad, ugly
"and venomous, which bears a precious jewel, in its
head." And, in another place, but with the same general
relation, "out of this thorn danger, we pluck the flower
safety." This law is just as relative to nations, as it is
to individuals. For, notwithstanding all the vaunting of
statesmen, their whole business is to apply an enlarged
common sense to the affairs, entrusted to their manage-
ment. It is as much the duty of the rulers of a state, as
it is that of an individual, to learn wisdom from misfor-
tune, and to draw, from every particular instance of ad-
versity, those maxims of conduct, by the collection and
application of which, our intellectual and moral natures
are distinguished and elevated. In all cases of this kind,
the inquiry ought to be, is this exigency peculiar, or is it
general? Is it one, in which human effort is unavailing,
and therefore requires, only, the exercise of a resignation
and wise submission to the divine will? Or is it one,
which skill, or power, may limit, or obviate? On the re-
sult of this inquiry our obligations depend. For when
man conducts toward a general evil, as though it were
peculiar; or when, through ignorance, or pusillanimity,
he neglects to use the means of relief, or prevention, to
the extent, in which he possesses them; if he stretches
himself out, in a stupid languor, and refuses to do any
thing, because he finds he cannot do every thing, then,
indeed, all his clamours against the course of nature, or
the conduct of others, are but artifices, by which he
would conceal from the world, perhaps from himself, the
texture of his own guilt. His misfortunes are, in such
case, his crimes. Let them proceed from what source
they will, he is himself, at least, a half-worker in the
fabric of his own miseries.

Mr. Speaker, can any one contemplate the exigency,
which at this day, depresses our country, and for one mo-
ment, deem it peculiar? The degree of such commer-
cial exigencies may vary, but they must, always, exist.
It is absurd to suppose that such a population as is that
of the Atlantic states can be either driven, or decoyed,
from the ocean? It is just as absurd to imagine, that
wealth will not invite cupidity; and that weakness will

not insure, both insult and plunder. The circumstances of our age make this truth, signally impressive. Who does not see, in the conduct of Europe, a general departure from those common principles, which once constituted national morality? What is safe, which power can seize, or ingenuity can circumvent? or what truths more palpable than these,—that there is no safety for national rights, but in the national arm; and that important interests, systematically pursued, must be systematically protected.

Touching the nature and degree of that maritime protection, which it may be wise, in this nation, to extend, to its maritime interests, it seems to me, that our exertions should rather be excited than graduated, by the present exigency; that our duty is to inquire, upon a general scale, what our commercial citizens, have, in this respect, a right to claim; and what is the unquestionable obligation of a commercial nation, to so great a class of its interests. For this purpose, my observations will have reference, rather to the principles of the system, than to the provisions of the bill, now under debate. Undoubtedly, an appropriation for the building of ten, or any other additional number of frigates, would be so distinct a manifestation of the intention of the national legislature to extend to commerce, its natural protection, as in itself to outweigh any theoretic preference, for a maritime force of a higher character. I cannot, therefore, but cordially support an appropriation for a species of protection, so important and desirable. Yet, in an argument, having relation to the system, rather than to the occasion, I trust I shall have the indulgence of the house, if my course of reflections should take a wider range than the propositions on the table, and embrace, within the scope of remark, the general principles, by which the nature and degree of systematic naval protection should, in my judgment be regulated.

Here, it seems, hardly, necessary to observe, that a main object of all protection is satisfaction to the persons, whose interests are intended to be protected. And to this object a peculiar attention ought to be paid, when it happens, that the majority of the rulers of a nation are composed of persons, not, immediately, concerned in

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those interests, and not, generally, suspected of having an overweening attachment to them. In such a state of things, it is peculiarly important, that the course of conduct adopted should be such as to indicate, systematic intention as to the end, and wise adaptation, as to the means. For, in no other way, can that satisfaction, of which I speak, result, and which, is, in a national point of view, at the same time, one of the most important objects of government, and one of the most certain evidences of its wisdom. For men, interested in protection, will always deem, themselves, the best judges of the nature of that protection. And as such men can never be content with any thing short of efficient protection, according to the nature of the object, so instinct, not less than reason, will instruct them, whether the means you employ are, in their nature, real, or illusory. Now, in order to know what will give this satisfaction to the persons, interested, so desirable both to them and to the nation, it is necessary to know the nature and gradation, in value of those interests and to extend protection, not so much with a lavish, as with a discriminating and parental hand. If it happen, in respect of any interest, as it is acknowledged, on all sides, it is, at present, the case, with the commercial, that it cannot be protected, against all the world, to the uttermost of its greatness and dispersion, then the enquiry occurs, what branch of this interest is most precious to commercial men, and what is the nature of that protection, which will give to it the highest degree of certainty, of which its nature is susceptible? It has been by the result of these two inquiries, in my mind, that its opinion has been determined concerning the objects, and the degree of protection.

Touching that branch of interest, which is most precious to commercial men, it is impossible, that there can be any mistake. For, however, dear the interests of property, or of life, exposed upon the ocean, may be to their owners, or their friends, t the safety of our alars and of our firesides, of our cities and of our seaboard, must, from the nature of things, be entwined into the affections, by ties, incomparably more strong and tender. And it happens that both national pride and honor are pe-

culiarly identified with the support of these primary objects of commercial interest.

It is in this view, I state that the first and most important object of the nation ought to be such a naval force, as shall give such a degree of rational security, as the nature of the subject admits, to our cities and sea-board and coasting trade ;—that the system of maritime protection ought to rest upon this basis ; and that it should not attempt to go further, until these objects are secured.— And I have no hesitation to declare, that until such a maritime force be systematically maintained, by this nation, it shamefully neglects, its most important duties and most critical interests.

With respect to the nature and extent of this naval force, some difference of opinion may arise, according to the view, taken of the primary objects of protection. For myself, I consider, that those objects are first to be protected, in the safety of which, the national character and happiness are most deeply interested. And these are, chiefly, concerned, beyond all question, in the preservation of our maritime settlements, from pillage and our coast from violence. For this purpose, it is requisite, that there should be a ship of war, for the harbor of every great city of the United States, equal, in point of force, to the usual grade of ships of the line of the maritime belligerents. These ships might be so instructed, as to act singly, or together, as circumstances might require. My reason for the selection of this species of force is, that it puts every city and great harbor of the United States, in a state of security from the insults, and the inhabitants of your sea coast from the depredation, of any single ship of war of any nation. To these should be added a number of frigates and smaller vessels of war. By such means our coasting trade might be protected, the mouths of our harbors secured, in particular, that of the Mississippi, from the buccaneers of the West Indies and, hereafter, perhaps, from those of South America. A system of protection, graduated upon a scale, so conformable to the nature of the country and to the greatness of the commercial interest, would tend to quiet that spirit of jealousy, which so naturally, and so justly, be-

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gins to spring among the States. Those interested, in Commerce would care little, what local influences pre-
dominated, or how the ball of power vibrated among our
factions, provided an efficient protection of their essen-
tial interests, upon systematic principles, was not only se-
cured by the letter of the constitution, but assured by a
spirit, pervading every description of their rulers.

But it is said, that "we have not capacity to maintain
such a naval force." Is it want of pecuniary, or want
of physical capacity? In relation to our pecuniary capa-
city, I will not condescend to add any proof to that plain
statement already exhibited, showing that we have an an-
nual commercial exposure, equal to *six hundred millions*
of dollars, and that *two thirds of one per cent*, upon this
amount of value, or *four millions of dollars*, is more than
is necessary, if annually and systematically appropriated,
for this great object; so anxiously and rightfully desired,
by your sea-board, and so essential to the honor and obli-
gations of the nation. I will only make a single other
statement, by way of illustrating the smallness of the an-
nual appropriations, necessary for the attainment of this
important purpose. The annual appropriation of *one*
sixth of one per cent, on the amount of the value of the
whole annual commercial exposure, (one million of dol-
lars) is sufficient to build in two years, six seventy-four
gun ships; and taking the average expense, in peace and
war, the annual appropriation of the same sum is suffi-
cient to maintain them afterwards, in a condition for ef-
ficient service. This objection of pecuniary inability,
may be believed in the interior country, where the great-
ness of the commercial property and all the tender obli-
gations, connected with its preservation, are not realized.
But, in the cities and in the commercial states, the extent
of the national resources is more truly estimated. They
know the magnitude of the interest at stake and their
essential claim to protection. Why, sir, were we serious-
ly to urge this objection of pecuniary incapacity, to the
commercial men of Massachusetts, they would laugh us to
scorn. Let me state a single fact. In the year 1745,
the state, then the colony of Massachusetts Bay, included
a population of 220,000 souls, and yet, in that infant state

of the country, it owned a fleet consisting of *three ships, one of which carried twenty guns—three snows—one brig—and three sloops*; being an aggregate of ten vessels of war. These partook of the dangers, and shared in the glory, of that expedition, which terminated with the surrender of Louisburgh. Comparing the population, the extent of territory, the capital and all the other resources of this great nation, with the narrow means of the colony of Massachusetts, at that period of its history, it is not extravagant to assert, that the fleet, it then possessed, in proportion to its pecuniary resources, was greater than would be, in proportion to the resources of the United States, a fleet of *fifty sail of the line and one hundred frigates*. With what language of wonder and admiration does that great orator and prince of moral statesmen, Edmund Burke, in his speech for conciliation with America, speak of the commerce and enterprize of that people! “When we speak of the commerce with our colonies, fiction lags after truth; invention is unfruitful, and imagination cold and barren.” “No sea, but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hard industry to the extent, to which it has been pushed, by this recent people; a people, who are still, as it were, but in the *garde*, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood.” And shall the descendants of such a people be told that their commercial rights are not worth defending, that the national arm is not equal to their protection? And this too, after the lapse of almost forty years has added an extent to their commerce beyond all parallel, in history, and after the strength and resources, associated to protect them exceed, in point of population seven millions of souls, possessing a real and personal capital, absolutely incalculable?

Our pecuniary capacity, then, is unquestionable, but it is said, we are deficient in physical power. It is strange that those, who urge this objection, assert it only as it respects Great Britain, and admit, either expressly, or by implication, indeed they cannot deny, that it is with-

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in our physical capacity to maintain our maritime rights against every other nation. Now, let it be granted, that we have such an utter incapacity, in relation to the British naval power; grant that, at the nod of that nation, we must abandon the ocean, to the very mouths of our harbors; nay our harbors themselves. What then? Does it follow that a naval force is useless? Because we must submit to have our rights plundered by one power, does it follow that we must be tame and submissive to every other? Look at the fact. We have, within these ten years, lost more property by the plunder of the minor naval powers of Europe, France included, than would have been enough to have built and maintained twice the number of ships, sufficient for our protection, against their depredations. I cannot exceed the fact, when I state the loss, within that period, by those powers, at *thirty millions of dollars*. Our capacity to defend our commerce, against every one of these powers, is undeniable. Because we cannot maintain our rights against the strong, shall we bear insult, and invite plunder, from the weak? Because there is one Leviathan, in the ocean, shall every shark satiate his maw, on our fatness, with impunity?

But let us examine this doctrine of utter inability to maintain our maritime rights, against Great Britain, so obtrusively and vehemently maintained by some, who clamor the most violently, against her insults and injuries. If the project were to maintain our maritime rights, against that mistress of the sea, by convoys spread over every ocean, there would, indeed, be, something, ludicrously fanciful and wild, in the proposition. But nothing like this is either proposed, or desired. The humility of commercial hope, in reference to that nation, rises no higher than the protection of our harbors, the security of our coasts and coasting trade. Is it possible that such a power as this shall be denied to exist, in this nation? If exist, is it possible that its exercise shall be withheld?

Look at the present state of our harbors and sea-coast. See their exposure, I will not say to the fleets of Great Britain, but to any single ship of the line; to any single frigate; to any single sloop of war. It is true the policy

of that nation induces her to regard your prohibitory laws, and her ships, now, seldom visit your ports. But suppose her policy should change; suppose any one of her ships of war should choose to burn any of the numerous settlements upon your sea-coast; or to plunder the inhabitants of it; would there not be some security to those exposed citizens, if a naval force were lying, in every great harbor of the United States, competent to protect, or avenge the aggression of any single ship of war, of whatever force? Would not the knowledge of its existence teach the naval commanders of that nation, both caution and respect? Sir. It is worthy of this nation, and fully within its capacity, to maintain such a force. Not a single sea-bull should put his head over our acknowledged water-line, without finding a power, sufficient to take him by the horns.

But it is said that, "in case of actual war, with Great Britain, our ships would be useless. She would come and take them." In reply, to this objection, I shall not recur to those details of circumstances, already so frequently stated, which would give our ships of war, fighting, on their own coasts, and in the proximity of relief and supply, so many advantages over the ships of a nation, obliged to come three thousand miles to the combat. But allowing this argument, from British naval superiority its full force, I ask, What is that temper, on which a nation can most safely rely in the day of trial? Is it that, which takes council of fear, or that, which listens, only, to the suggestions of duty? Is it that, which magnifies all the real dangers, until hope and exertion are paralyzed, in their first germinations? Or, is it that, which dares to attempt noble ends, by appropriate means; which, wisely, weighing the nature of any anticipated exigency, prepares, according to its powers, resolved that, whatever else it may want, to itself, it will never be wanting? Grant all that is said, concerning British naval superiority, in the events of war, has comparative weakness nothing to hope from opportunity? Are not the circumstances, in which this country and Great Britain would be placed, relative to naval combats, upon our own coast, of a nature to strengthen the hope of such

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opportunity? Is it of no worth to a nation to be in a condition to avail itself of conjunctures and occurrences?
Mr. Speaker. Preparation, in such cases, is every thing. All history is replete with the truth, that "the battle is not, always, to the strong,—but that time and chance happen to all." Suppose that Great Britain should send Twelve Seventy-fours to burn our cities, or lay waste our coasts. Might not such a naval force be dispersed by storms; diminished by shipwrecks; or delayed and weakened by the events of the voyage? In such case, would it be nothing to have even half that number of line of battle ships, in a state of vigorous preparation, ready to take the advantage of so probable a circumstance; and so providential an interposition? The adage, of our school books, is as true, in relation to states, as to men, in common life;—"Heaven helps those, who help themselves." It is almost a law of nature. God grants every thing to wisdom and virtue. He denies every thing to folly and baseness. But suppose the worst. Grant that, in a battle, such as our brave seamen would fight, in defence of their country, our naval force be vanquished. What then? Did enemies ever plunder, or violate, more fiercely, when weakened and crippled by the effects of a hard fought victory, than when flushed, their veins full, they rush upon their prey, with cupidity stimulated by contempt? Did any foe, ever grant to pusillanimity, what it would have denied to prowess? To be conquered, is not, always, to be disgraced. The heroes, who shall perish in such combats, shall not fall in vain for their country. Their blood will be the most precious, as well as the strongest, cement of our Union. What is it, that constitutes, the moral tie of our nation? Is it that paper contract, called the constitution? Why is it, that the man of Virginia, the man of Carolina, and the man of Massachusetts are dearer to each other than is, to either, the man of South America or the West Indies? Locality has little to do with implanting this inherent feeling and personal acquaintance less. Whence, then, does it result, but from that moral sentiment, which pervades all and is precious to all, of having shared common dangers, for the attainment of common blessings. The strong ties of every

people are those, which spring from the heart and twine through the affections. The family compact of the States has this for its basis, that their heroes have mingled their blood, in the same contests; that all have a common right in their glory; that, if I may be allowed the expression, in the temple of patriotism all have the same worship.

But it is inquired, "what effect will this policy have upon the present exigency?" I answer, the happiest, in every aspect. To exhibit a definitive intent to maintain maritime rights, by maritime means, what is it, but to develop new stamina of national character? No nation can, or has a right, to hope respect from others, which does not first learn to respect itself. And how is this to be attained? By a course of conduct, conformable to its duties, and relative to its condition. If it abandons, what it ought to defend; if it flies from the field, it is bound to maintain, how can it hope for honor? To what other inheritance is it entitled, but disgrace? Foreign nations, undoubtedly, look upon this union, with eyes, long, read in the history of man; and with thoughts, deeply, versed, in the effects of passion and interest, upon independent states, associated by ties, so, apparently, slight and novel. They understand well, that the rivalries among the great interests of such states; the natural envyings, which, in all countries, spring between agriculture, commerce and manufactures; the inevitable jealousies and fears of each other, of south and north, interior and sea-board; the incipient, or progressive rancour of party animosity; are the essential weaknesses of sovereignties, thus, combined. Whether these causes shall operate, or whether they shall cease, foreign nations will gather from the features of our policy. They cannot believe that such a nation is strong, in the affections of its associated parts, when they see the vital interests of whole states abandoned. But reverse this policy; show a definitive and stable intent to yield the natural protection to such essential interests; then they will respect you. And, to powerful nations, honor comes attended by safety.

Mr. Speaker—What is national disgrace? Of what stuff is it composed? Is a nation disgraced because its

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flag is insulted ;—because its seamen are impressed ;—because its course, upon the highway of the ocean, is obstructed? No, sir. Abstractedly considered, all this is not disgrace. Because all this may happen to a nation, so weak as not to be able to maintain the dignity of its flag ; or the freedom of its citizens ; or the safety of its course. Natural weakness is never disgrace. But, sir, this is disgrace ; when we submit to insult, and to injury, which we have the power to prevent, or redress. Its essential constituents are want of sense, or want of spirit. When a nation, with ample means, for its defence, is so thick in the brain, as not to put them into a suitable state of preparation ; or, when, with sufficient muscular force, it is so tame, in spirit, as to seek safety, not in manly effort, but in retirement ; then a nation is disgraced ; then it shrinks from its high and sovereign character, into that of the tribe of Issachar, crouching down, between two burdens ; the French burden, on the one side, and the British burden, on the other, so dull, so lifeless, so stupid, that, were it not for its braying, it could not be distinguished from the clod of the valley.

It is impossible for European nations not to know, that we are the second commercial country, in the world ; that we have more than seven millions of people ; with less annual expenditure and more unpledged sources of revenue than any nation, of the civilized world. Yet a nation, thus, distinguished, abounding in wealth, in enterprise and in power, is seen, flying away from “the unprofitable contest,” abandoning the field of controversy ; taking refuge behind its own doors and softening the rigors of oppression abroad, by a comparison, with worse torments, at home. Ought such a nation to ask for respect? Is there any other mode of relief from this depth of disgrace, than by a change of national conduct and character?

With respect to Great Britain, it seems impossible, that such a change, in our policy, should not be auspicious. No nation ever did, or ever can conduct towards one, that is true, in the same way as it conducts towards one, that is false to all its obligations. Clear conceptions of interest and faithful fulfilment of duty, as certainly in-

sure, sooner or later, honor and safety, as blindness to interest and abandonment of duty do, assuredly, entail disgrace and embarrassment. In relation to the principle, which regulates the commercial conduct of Great Britain towards the United States, there is much scope for diversity of opinion. Perhaps, those judge most truly, who do not attribute to her any very distinct, or uniform, system of action, in relation to us; but who deem her course to result from views of temporary expedience, growing out of the circumstances of the time, and the character of our administration. If this be the case, then, whatever course of conduct has a tendency to show a change, in the character of the American policy, must produce a proportionate change, in that of the British.— And if tameness and systematic abandonment of our commercial rights have had the effect to bring upon us so many miseries, a contrary course of conduct, having for its basis a wise spirit and systematic naval support, it may well be hoped, will have the opposite effect of renewing our prosperity. But, if it be true, as is so frequently and so confidently, asserted, that Great Britain is jealous of our commercial greatness; if it be true that she would depress us, as rivals; if she begins to regard us as a power, which may soon curb, if not, in aftertimes spurn, her proud control on her favorite element, then, indeed, she may be disposed to quench the ardor of our naval enterprise; then, indeed, it may be her care so to shape the course of her policy as to deprive our commerce of all hope of its natural protection; and to co-operate with, and cherish, such an administration, in this country, as hates a naval force and loves commercial restriction.— In this view of her policy; and I am far from asserting, it is not correct, is it not obvious, that she may be content, with the present condition of our commerce? Except acknowledged colonial vassalage, what state of things would be more desirable to her? The whole sea is her own. Her American rival, tamely, makes cession of it to her possession. Our commercial capital is, already, seeking employment, in her cities; and our seamen, in her ships. What then results? Is it not, on this view of her policy, undeniable, that an administration, in this

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country, for the purposes of Great Britain, is such as thinks commerce not worth having, or not worth defending; such as, in every scheme of nominal protection, meditates to it nothing, but additional embarrassment and eventual abandonment? Must not such an administration be convenient to a British ministry, if such be British policy? And if British ministers should ever find such an administration, in this country, made to their hands, may we not anticipate that they will take care, to manage, with a view to its continuance in power? Of all policy the most ominous to British ascendancy, is that of a systematic, maritime defence of our maritime rights.

The general effect of the policy, I advocate, is to produce confidence at home, and respect abroad. These are twin shoots from the same stock and never fail to flourish, or fade together. Confidence is a plant of no mushroom growth and of no artificial texture. It springs, only, from sage councils and generous endeavors. The protection, you extend must be efficient and suited to the nature of the object, you profess to maintain. If it be neither adequate, nor appropriate, your wisdom may be doubted, your motives may be distrusted, but, in vain, you expect confidence. The inhabitants of the sea-board will inquire of their own senses and not of your logic, concerning the reality of their protection.

As to respect abroad, what course can be more certain to ensure it? What object more honorable, what more dignified, than to behold a great nation pursuing wise ends, by appropriate means; rising to adopt a series of systematic exertions, suited to her power and adequate to her purposes? What object more consolatory to the friends, what more paralyzing to the enemies of our union, than to behold the natural jealousies and rivalries, which are the acknowledged dangers of our political condition, subsiding, or sacrificing? What sight more exhilarating than to see this great nation, once more, walking forth, among the nations of the earth, under the protection of no foreign shield? Peaceful, because powerful. Powerful, because united in interests and amalgamated by concentration of those interests, in the national affections.

But let the opposite policy prevail ; let the essential interests of the great component parts of this union find no protection, under the national arm ; instead of safety, let them realize oppression, and the seeds of discord, and dissolution are, inevitably, sown, in a soil, the best fitted for their root, and affording the richest nourishment for their expansion. It may be a long time before they ripen. But, sooner, or later, they will assuredly, burst forth, in all their destructive energies. In the intermediate period, what aspect does an union, thus destitute of cement, present ? Is it that of a nation keen to discern and strong to resist violations of its sovereignty ? It has rather the appearance of a casual collection of semi-barbarous clans ; with the forms of civilization and with the rude and rending passions of the savage state. In truth, powerful. Yet, as to any foreign effect, imbecile. Rich in the goods of fortune, yet wanting that inherent spirit, without which a nation is poor indeed ; their strength exhausted, by struggles for local power ; their moral sense debased, by low intrigues for personal popularity, or temporary pre-eminence ; all their thoughts turned, not to the safety of the state, but to the elevation of a chieftain. A people, presenting such an aspect,—what have they to expect abroad ? What, but pillage, insult and scorn ?

The choice is before us. Persist in refusing efficient maritime protection ; persist in the system of commercial restrictions ; what now, is, perhaps, anticipation, will, hereafter, be history.

ERRATA.

Page 12, in 1st line of the 4th Paragraph—instead of 1791—Read—1789—In the 2d line of the same Paragraph—instead of 1799—Read 1797.

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